



BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

President Donald J. Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin shake hands before their meeting Monday in Helsinki, Finland. Trump said relations with Russia “have never been worse,” but that changed because of the meeting.

Trump sides with Putin on election role

President slams Mueller’s probe, accepts Russian leader’s denials

BY ELI STOKOLS
AND SABRA AYRES
Washington Bureau

HELSINKI — President Donald J. Trump slammed the special counsel’s investigation into his campaign’s possible election collusion with Russia and, with Russian President Vladimir Putin alongside him at a news conference Monday, seemed to accept Putin’s denials of wrongdoing over the unanimous conclusions of U.S. intelligence officials.

The president also blamed the United States for relations with Moscow that he said have “never been worse.” He added, “However, that changed as of about four hours ago” — referring to his meeting with Putin at Finland’s presidential palace.

When Trump was asked by a U.S. reporter whether he believes Putin or his own intelligence officials, who unanimously say Russia did intervene for

Inside

Some Trump loyalists critical of his appearance with Putin. **NEWS PG 4**

Trump, he replied by criticizing the FBI for not doing enough to probe Democrats.

“My people came to me,” Trump said, speaking of intelligence officials including director of national intelligence Dan Coats, and “They said they think it’s Russia. I have President Putin. He just said it’s not Russia. I will say this, I don’t see any reason why it would be.”

Coats, a former Republican senator who on Friday warned that the United States “is literally under attack” by Russian cyberthreats, felt compelled to issue a statement standing by U.S. intelligence agencies in the face of the president’s

skepticism.

“We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security.”

The president repeatedly condemned the FBI and the probe of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, which on Friday brought indictments of 12 Russian intelligence officials. He called it “a disaster for our country.”

Putin claimed to be unfamiliar with what he called the “alleged intelligence officers” but offered, as his counter to calls in Washington to extradite them to the United States, to allow Russian authorities to interrogate them for Mueller, along with U.S. investigators. In turn, Putin said, Russia would get American assistance

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Sinclair merger may be in peril

FCC chairman voices ‘serious concerns’ about Tribune deal

BY LORRAINE MIRABELLA
The Baltimore Sun

Sinclair Broadcast Group’s proposed \$3.9 billion takeover of Tribune Media appears in jeopardy after the head of the Federal Communications Commission raised concerns Monday about the controversial deal.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, an appointee of President Donald J. Trump who has been viewed as friendly to such a merger, said in a statement that after a thorough review, “I have serious concerns about the Sinclair/Tribune transaction.”

“The evidence we’ve received suggests that certain station divestitures that have been proposed to the FCC would allow Sinclair to control those stations in practice, even if not in name, in violation of the law,” Pai said. “When the FCC confronts disputed issues like these, the Communications Act does not allow it to approve a transaction.”

Pai said Monday that he is circulating a draft order among FCC commissioners that would require an administrative law judge at the agency to hold a hearing on issues related to some of the proposed station sales.

Shares of both companies plunged on the news. Hunt Valley-based Sinclair’s stock fell 11.7 percent Monday to close at \$29.10 a share, while shares of Chicago-based Tribune tumbled 16.7 percent, closing at \$32.12 each.

In a statement late Monday, a Sinclair spokesman said Pai’s announcement left the company shocked and disappointed. The broadcaster has been transparent during its many meetings and discussions with the FCC about the station buyers, proposing the types of arrangements broadcasters have used for years with FCC approval, the company said.

“We have fully identified who the buyers are and the terms under which stations

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Santelises orders shake-up of principals

Expectations have changed, city schools CEO says

BY ERICA L. GREEN
The Baltimore Sun

Three years ago, Nikkia Rowe emerged as the embodiment of what it meant to be a Baltimore principal. As riots put the perils facing the city’s youth under a national microscope, Renaissance Academy High School was held up as a safe haven for West Baltimore.

But in the last week of this academic year, Rowe was called to school system headquarters and told by the district’s labor relations representative that that was no longer enough.

Rowe is one of several high-profile principals who have been removed or reassigned as part of a leadership shake-up by schools CEO Sonja Santelises this summer. In the coming school year, 16 traditional schools will have new principals, and 12 principals, including Rowe, will leave

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Santelises

SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

MARYLAND

MD. RETIREES: State government retirees will get financial assistance from the state to help pay for medications when their prescription drug coverage moves from a state plan to the federal Medicare Part D program next year. **NEWS PG 2**

POLICE INCIDENT: Baltimore police are investigating an incident in which an officer was flagged down by a firefighter who had seen a man with a gun downtown — but the officer declined to respond. **NEWS PG 2**

WORLD & NATION

OBAMA IN AFRICA: Former President Barack Obama praised Kenya’s president and opposition leader for working together but said this East African country must do more to end corruption. **NEWS PG 6**

IMMIGRATION: A federal judge ordered a temporary halt to deportations of immigrant families reunited after being separated at the border, as the Trump administration races to meet a July 26 deadline for putting thousands of children back in parents’ arms. **NEWS PG 6**

TODAY’S WEATHER

VARIABLE CLOUDS, WITH A STORM

91 HIGH | 68 LOW



Sunny, less humid Wednesday **SPORTS PG 12**

ELECTION 2018 GOVERNOR

Analysts: single-payer care means tax jump

Health care plan like Jealous’ could cost Md. \$24B a year, they say

BY LUKE BROADWATER
The Baltimore Sun

State-sponsored health insurance for all Marylanders such as the single-payer plan proposed by Democratic gubernatorial nominee Ben Jealous could cost \$24 billion a year, forcing lawmakers to significantly raise taxes, according to a nonpartisan analysis.

Such a cost would increase the state’s \$44 billion operating budget by more than half.

The analysis, drafted by the state’s Department of Legislative Services and released to The Baltimore Sun, said Maryland would have to levy a 10 percent payroll tax against every business and charge a \$2,800 fee for every man, woman and child to pay for a new health care system in which doctors bill the state instead of private insurance companies.

“Clearly, any single-payer program represents a significant restructuring of the State’s current health care delivery system and tax system,” the analysts wrote.

The Jealous campaign — which has



KENNETH K. LAM/BALTIMORE SUN

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Ben Jealous’ campaign pushed back against the state analysts’ findings.

pledged to create a universal health care system without waiting for the federal government to take the lead — pushed back against the analysis, saying it believes an overhaul of the health care system can be done for much less. Moreover, they argue, even though the state budget would grow, the average Marylander would pay less for health care.

“Everyone is supposed to have access to

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